

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the Claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of transporting and installing articles slated for inventory to an article dispensing machine, comprising the steps of:

loading ~~storing~~ a[[n]] plurality of articles of inventory ~~within~~ into an article transport storage unit;

assigning the article transport storage unit to an article dispensing machine, wherein the article dispensing machine comprises an article transport storage unit receiving station and at least one article storage rack;

causing the article transport storage unit to be in a locked condition wherein the plurality of articles of inventory cannot be accessed;

causing delivery of the locked article transport storage unit to the article dispensing machine;

permitting installation of the locked article transport storage unit into the article transport storage unit receiving station of the article dispensing machine;[[and]]

following installation of the article transport storage unit into the article transport storage unit receiving station of the article dispensing machine, causing the article transport storage unit to enter an unlocked condition for allowing unloading of the plurality of articles of inventory to occur; and, wherein the article of inventory is accessible.

automatically unloading the plurality of articles from the unlocked article transport storage unit and transferring the plurality of articles to the at least one storage rack for later rental or purchase of the plurality of articles.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein delivery of the locked article transport storage unit is carried out by an independent delivery company.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the article of inventory is a flat-pack type article of inventory.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3 wherein each of the plurality of articles of inventory is a digital video disc and a case associated with said digital video disc.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~further comprising the step of storing a second article of inventory within said article transport storage unit and further comprising the step of permitting the second article of inventory to be accessible following the step of causing the article transport storage unit to enter an unlocked condition~~ wherein the article transport storage unit comprises an opaque housing which is constructed to prevent the plurality of articles of inventory from being visually identified from outside of the article transport storage unit when the articles of inventory are loaded into the article transport storage unit.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[5]]1 ~~wherein said article of inventory and said second article of inventory are stored within said article transport storage unit such that they are in an aligned relationship with respect to each other~~ the article transport storage unit comprises a housing having a single opening into which and from which the plurality of articles of inventory can be loaded and unloaded, respectively.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of causing the article transport storage to enter the unlocked condition occurs automatically ~~[[once]]~~ proximate in time just following installation of the article transport storage unit into the article dispensing machine, and irrespective of selection, rental, and/or purchase of one of the plurality of article of inventory.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~further comprising the step of stocking the article dispensing machine with the article of inventory following the step of causing the article transport unit to enter the unlocked condition~~ wherein the article transport storage unit comprises a housing having an opening into which and from which the plurality of articles of inventory can be loaded and unloaded, respectively, and having a circular storage rack for receiving and storing the plurality of articles of inventory, wherein the circular storage rack can rotate within the housing for aligning each of the plurality of articles of inventory with the opening for unloading each of the articles from the article transport storage unit, and wherein the circular storage rack is prevented from rotating when the article transport storage unit is locked.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of permitting installation of the locked article transport storage unit into the article dispensing machine is carried out by use of infrared technology.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of permitting installation of the locked article transport storage unit into the article dispensing machine is carried out by use of a radio frequency identification tag associated with at least one of the article transport storage unit and the article dispensing machine.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of transporting and installing articles slated for inventory to an article dispensing machine, comprising the steps of:

storing a first plurality of articles of inventory within a first article transport storage unit to be installed within an article dispensing machine, wherein the article dispensing machine comprises an article transport storage unit receiving station and at least one article storage rack;

assigning the first article transport storage unit to the article dispensing machine;

causing the first article transport storage unit to be in a locked condition wherein the first plurality of articles of inventory cannot be accessed;

causing delivery of the locked first article transport storage unit to the article dispensing machine;

automatically transferring a second plurality of articles of inventory, positioned within the at least one storage rack, from the at least one storage rack to a second article transport storage unit, and loading the second plurality of articles of inventory into the second article transport storage unit;

causing entry of a command at the article dispensing machine;

causing [[a]] the second article transport storage unit storing [[a]] the second plurality of articles of inventory, [[and]] positioned within [[said]] the article transport storage unit receiving station of the article dispensing machine to enter a locked condition in response to [[said]] the command;

causing ejection of [[said]] the locked second article transport storage unit from the article transport storage unit receiving station of the article dispensing machine;

causing removal of said locked second article transport storage unit away from said article dispensing machine;

permitting installation of the locked first article transport storage unit into the article transport storage unit receiving station of the article dispensing machine; and

following installation of the first article transport storage unit into the article dispensing machine, causing the first article transport storage unit to enter an unlocked condition wherein the first plurality of articles of inventory ~~[[is]]~~ are accessible.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 ~~wherein delivery of the locked first article transport storage unit is carried out by an independent delivery company~~ further comprising the step of automatically unloading the first plurality of articles of inventory from the unlocked first article transport storage unit and transferring the first plurality of articles of inventory to the at least one storage rack for later rental or purchase of the first plurality of articles.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein each of the first and second plurality of articles of inventory are flat-pack type articles of inventory.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein each of the first and second plurality of articles of inventory are digital video discs and cases associated therewith.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12~~[[1]]~~ wherein the step of automatically unloading the first plurality of articles of inventory occurs automatically after the step of causing the first article transport storage unit to enter an unlocked condition ~~further comprising the step of storing a third article of inventory within said first article transport storage unit and further comprising the step of permitting the third article of inventory to be accessible following the step of causing the first article transport storage unit to enter an unlocked condition.~~

16. (Canceled) ~~The method of claim 15 wherein said first article of inventory and said third article of inventory are stored within said first article transport storage unit such that they are in an aligned relationship with respect to each other.~~

17. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the step of causing the first article transport storage to enter the unlocked condition occurs automatically following installation of the first article transport storage unit into the article dispensing machine.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of stocking the article dispensing machine with the first article of inventory following the step of causing the first article transport unit to enter the unlocked condition~~ A method of transporting and installing articles slated for inventory to an article dispensing machine, comprising the steps of:

loading a plurality of articles of inventory into an article transport storage unit, wherein the article transport storage unit comprises an opaque housing which is constructed to prevent the plurality of articles of inventory from being visually identified from outside of the article transport storage unit after the articles of inventory are loaded into the article transport storage unit;

assigning the article transport storage unit to an article dispensing machine, wherein the article dispensing machine comprises an article transport storage unit receiving station;

causing the article transport storage unit to be in a locked condition wherein the plurality of articles of inventory cannot be accessed;

causing delivery of the locked article transport storage unit to the article dispensing machine;

permitting installation of the locked article transport storage unit into the article transport storage unit receiving station of the article dispensing machine; and,

following installation of the article transport storage unit into the article transport storage unit receiving station of the article dispensing machine, causing the article transport storage unit to enter an unlocked condition for allowing access to the plurality of articles.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18[[1]] wherein the article transport storage unit comprises a housing having a single opening into which and from which the plurality of articles of inventory can be loaded and unloaded, respectively ~~entry of the command is carried out by use of infrared technology.~~

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18[[1]] wherein the article dispensing machine further comprises at least one article storage rack, the method further comprising the step of automatically unloading the plurality of articles of inventory from the unlocked article transport storage unit and transferring the plurality of articles of inventory to the at least one storage rack for later rental or purchase of the plurality of articles of inventory ~~entry of the command is carried out by use of a radio frequency identification tag associated with at least one of the first article transport storage unit and the article dispensing machine.~~